

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13) won approval of \$1.2 million in federal funding for Mote Marine Laboratories in Sarasota. Meanwhile, the Congressman also announced that the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has awarded \$814,174 to Mote for highly migratory shark fishery research.

The Congressman requested the \$1.2 million federal funds to support the marine research facilities collaborative efforts to develop and establish a marine science curriculum and theater, migratory shark research, and an initiative for the recovery of the nation's ocean fisheries. The funding is contained in two appropriations bills expected to be approved by the House this week and next.

"Mote Marine is a global leader in marine sciences," said Buchanan. "This funding will support their efforts to increase our understanding of the sea and what is needed to sustain the ocean's vital natural resources."

"Mote Marine Laboratory deeply appreciates Congressman Buchanan's efforts to secure continued federal funding for Mote's shark research, stock enhancement and distance learning programs," said Mote marine Laboratory President Kumar Mahadaven. "We applaud the Congressman's commitment to ocean science and research and are hopeful that his colleagues in the senate will join in supporting his efforts on our behalf."

The fiscal year 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act includes \$200,000 sought by Buchanan to help Mote Marine Laboratory's cooperative effort to further develop and establish an interactive marine science curriculum and theater. The technology will serve as a prototype for a nationwide network of distance learning programs linking underwater activities, exploration, and resources to visitor centers through interactive videoconferencing.

The fiscal year 2008 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Act includes the following Buchanan requests:

- \$600,000 for Mote Marine Laboratory and the National Shark Consortium for its migratory shark fishery research program. The consortium is conducting collaborative, multi-regional biological research on highly migratory species of sharks to gather information necessary to effectively manage and conserve threatened fish resources.
- \$400,000 for Science Consortium for Ocean Replenishment (SCORE) at Mote Marine Laboratory. Score is a multi-state initiative for the recovery of the nation's ocean fisheries.

The continuation of funding for Mote's work on highly migratory shark species will allow the research laboratory to provide the National Marine Fisheries Services with critical data on the status of one of the ocean's key species, while funds for stock enhancement research move the marine science community closer to perfect the tools needed to replenish our nation's critically depleted fisheries. Distance learning funds will help bring the wonders of marine science and our underwater marine sanctuaries to students all over Florida, across the country and beyond.

The Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations is expected to pass to be passed by the House as early as this week and the Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations is expected to be passed by the House the week of July 23.

The NOAA grant will fund the National Shark Research Consortium's efforts to examine the biology of sharks, skates, and rays in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans off the U.S. coast, the Gulf of Mexico and the Bering Sea.